

where the dead goat had been found. When we were about 22 m from the tree on which the dead goat was perched, I saw a leopard like animal lying on another horizontal bough close to the dead goat, and licking its right fore paw. Since we were facing the sun we could not get a clear view of the animal against the sun. We moved a little till we had an uninterrupted view of the animal. It was smaller than the common leopard, with large dull coloured patches all over the body.

We observed the animal for about 15-20 minutes, and from its size and colour pattern concluded that it was a clouded leopard.

We had been watching it for 15-20 minutes when the wood cutter brushed against a sapling, which made the leopard look in our direction and see us. It stood up on the bough and saw us more clearly. The wood cutter happened to remark that the leopard had seen us. On hearing the voice, the leopard rushed along the horizontal bough, and jumped down and vanished among the undergrowth.

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7. SIGHTING OF TAKIN (*BUDORCAS TAXICOLOR*) IN THE MEHAO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

During my field work to study the vegetation and bird diversity of Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, I had the chance of sighting takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*). Takin is one of the rare and endangered rupicaprid (goat-antelope). It combines the features of the ox, goat and antelope. Its most striking feature is its convex 'face', heavy mouth, and thick neck. I was 150 m away from the animal, which was standing alone. There is a salt lick at this spot frequented by several ungulate species. The takin was grazing near the salt lick and did not move from the spot for nearly 20 minutes. Later, as we moved closer, the animal was disturbed and went down the steep valley. Since the terrain was very steep I could not get close in order to identify its sex, age and other features. A takin was reared by the Forest Department in an enclosure near the Mayodia guest house, which I used to observe closely whenever I was there. I was thus familiar with this animal and so there was no chance of misidentification. According to Prater (1971) the

takin is found in the Bhutan Himalayas, the Mishmi Hills and in the mountains of the Salween-Irrawaddy divide. It was reported by Manjrekar *et al.* (1990) that only indirect evidence of takin was found in the Mehao Sanctuary, during the survey of the species. Later, on enquiry, I was told by the locals that while other ungulates such as serow and sambar were sighted by them frequently at the salt lick, the takin was a rare sighting for them also. This sighting confirms the presence of takin in the Sanctuary. The habitat in that particular area is still comparatively undisturbed, due to which the ungulate sightings are more frequent. The hunting pressure is also comparatively low in this part of the Sanctuary due to the tough, inaccessible terrain.

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